

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 8, 2007

CONTACT: Laura Capps/Melissa Wagoner
(202) 224-2633

**CHAIRMAN KENNEDY HOLDS HELP COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE ON NO CHILD
LEFT BEHIND ACT REAUTHORIZATION**

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I welcome our participants this morning in the first of several roundtable discussions on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. I'm especially grateful to Senator Enzi for his help and the help of his staff, as well as Senator Dodd and Senator Alexander's staff, in putting together this roundtable. We look forward to continuing the bipartisan partnership on these issues.

Our public schools today are more indispensable than ever in giving all students the opportunity they need and deserve in life. We all agree upon the importance for the nation's future of strengthening and supporting our schools, and reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act this year is a high priority for Congress and the American people. The law enacted five years ago was a defining moment in federal support for public education, and was intended to respond to the many challenges facing our schools in today's rapidly changing world.

We know that schools have faced many difficulties in implementing the Act – the most serious of which has been the lack of adequate funding. But we've also learned a great deal over the past five years about what's working well in the law, and what needs to be changed. Our goal this year will be to work together across party lines to enact a strong reauthorization that builds on the positive aspects of the law, and answers the widespread concerns about implementation.

Today, our focus is on ideas and strategies needed to turn-around struggling schools identified by the law's accountability provisions.

The Act appropriately ensures that accountability is guided by realistic data on every child in every state. "No Child" means no child. The Act is a promise to students and parents alike that

regardless of their background, language, income, or disability, every student counts in school reform.

The initial results of the Act's accountability provisions show that states have focused primarily on standards, assessments, and measurements in building their frameworks for accountability. But much more remains to be done after that essential first step, especially in schools that haven't met the challenge and are wrestling with improvement. The federal role in assisting these schools may be our greatest challenge and it's a top priority for this reauthorization.

Over 9,000 low-income schools have been identified by the Act for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. Some of these schools are in the early stage of changing their curriculums or beginning tutoring. Others are in later stages of replacing staff or reforming their overall approach to teaching and learning. Thousands of schools are waiting for technical assistance and support to develop and implement their improvement plans as required by the law, in order to avoid the later stages required in restructuring.

In fact, only 34 percent of schools needing improvement – one in three – have received outside help or support. Developing the ability to do so is a major challenge at all levels. Obviously, we must do better. Fortunately, we know we can.

Today, we'll hear about some of the successful solutions that states, school districts, and individual schools have adopted to make their improvement efforts successful. We'll hear how teachers and principals have concentrated on data on each child to produce results. We'll hear how outside experts and coaches have made a substantial difference in improving the quality of teaching. We'll hear how schools have partnered to learn from each other to achieve improvement.

We know it can be done, and today is our opportunity to consider how best to shape policies and allocate federal resources to achieve the greatest impact in these high-priority schools.

We look forward to your insights, and we're grateful to you for being part of this immensely important task.